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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Azerbaijan Terrorism - Amman
German Coalition Iran
PARIS - Monday, November 14, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Azerbaijan
Terrorism - Amman
German Coalition
Iran

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Although many front pages continue to focus on France's suburban unrest, other stories are also featured. Azerbaijan and "its missed" revolution is front-paged in Le Figaro: "Putin Takes Over in Azerbaijan." (See Part C) The UN-sponsored summit in Tunis on the Internet is "The Disinformation Summit" for left-of-center Liberation which comments in its editorial: "One has to wonder about the absurdity and appropriateness of holding such a summit in such a country: a clearer sign regarding freedom of the press could not have been sent." In an interview, Reporters Without Borders says it is "like choosing Libya to head the Human Rights Commission."

Other international stories focus on Iran's rejection of the EU compromise (See Part C) and conjecture about the attacks in Amman and Jordan's previous attack-free status. Le Journal du Dimanche in its report states that Amman provided the CIA with a secret prison site. La Croix reports that the four suicide bombers responsible for the attack in Amman last week were all Iraqi members of Al-Qaeda. The king of Jordan is quoted: "Zarkawi has changed strategies. He is now using foreigners to carry out attacks. This means that our security services will also need to change strategies." (See Part C) The German coalition is also the focus of several editorials (See Part C) while President Bush's forthcoming trip is noted in Le Figaro Economie: "President Bush will be traveling to China in a difficult context. The U.S. trade deficit is largely due to a trade imbalance with China. The fluctuating Yuan will not be the sole point of friction: intellectual property and the impact of China's economic growth on world markets will also be discussed. But the agreement on textiles will help to ease the tension, somewhat."

Secretary Rice's trip to the Middle East was announced this

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morning in the electronic media and briefly noted in Le Figaro: "During her 24-hour visit the U.S. Secretary of State will meet with Sharon and later with Mahmoud Abbas."

Popular right-of-center Le Parisien notes that France's government spokesman, Jean-Francois Cope is calling a press conference with foreign correspondents to "revamp France's image" abroad, an image which "has been considerably tarnished by the spectacular coverage given by the foreign media." FM Villepin, upset by the "sensationalism" and the attacks on "France's social model" has mobilized his entire government to "bring back tourists and investors." According to Henri Vernet's report, FM Villepin may even be considering an interview with CNN. The campaign, writes Vernet, "is very similar to the one France undertook to improve France's image in the U.S. during the Franco-American dispute about Iraq."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Azerbaijan

"Moscow Wants to Thwart Baku Revolution"

Laure Mandeville in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/14): "The inability of the Azeri rebels to pull off a Ukrainian-style revolution is due as much to Washington's shy support as to Moscow's activism. In the Byzantine-like game being played in the Caucasus, Moscow had its eyes on Armenia and Iran, leaving Turkey and Azerbaijan to the U.S. But the Russians have just proven that they have key players positioned in Baku, including inside Aliiev's clan."

"Stalled Democracy"

Alain Guillemoles in Catholic La Croix (11/14): "The opposition leaders know they will not be able to count on American support. Azerbaijan had indeed established close relations with Washington since the construction of a pipeline. But Washington, although it has called for 'free and fair elections' is not ready to support a change of regime." German Coalition

"German Cohabitation"

Jean-Michel Salvator in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/14): "Merkel is proposing a courageous program to her country. Her diagnostic is both clear-minded and demanding. But her fiscal measures, although courageous and willful, are not, when seen from France, devoid of danger. The German government is going to tax individuals and companies, thus weakening even more middle class consumerism. Angela Merkel is in fact going against her nature: she is now leading a government calling for more taxes and not enough strong reforms. The need for more liberal employment rules will have to wait. Merkel's left-right coalition is made up of small deals and big compromises. What awaits Merkel is a hard and prolonged battle with her adversaries. And contrary to French style cohabitation, Germany's foreign policy will not enjoy a consensus: the FM is pro-Turkey in the EU, while Merkel is not. But the issue has been shelved for now."

"German Transition"

Pierre Rousselin in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/12): "The great coalition, to which German voters have condemned their country by refusing to choose between the right and the left, on Sept. 18, has finally given birth to a very modest common government program. It's a pity. But it would be naive to expect anything else from former adversaries who are obliged to get along, just as it would be an error to stop there and to conclude that Germany is broken down."

Terrorism - Amman

"Why Jordan Is No Longer Spared"

Nicolas Henin in right-of-center Le Journal du Dimanche (11/13): "People said it was the 'Jordanian miracle.' Next to her neighbors, Jordan's safety record in terms of terrorism was almost insulting. It was partly due to the effectiveness of its intelligence services, but also to an implicit pact among Jihadists not to attack their mother country. After 9/11 that pact was blown apart. Later there was the war in Iraq and the collaboration between Amman and Washington in security issues: Jordan opened up part of a disaffected military base in southern Jordan, Al-Jafr. The base was lent to the CIA which turned it into a secret prison. Many Al-Qaeda detainees have transited through the prison. This was known in Jordan. The date, nine eleven, or November 9, recalls another 9/11."

Iran

"Iran Rejects European Offer"

Maurin Picard in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/14): "There will be no compromise. Faithful to its hard line, the Iranian government has made liars of those who wanted to believe in an agreement. The Mullahs have categorically rejected the European offer, called the 'last chance compromise' by the Europeans and the Americans who have been discreetly supporting the EU. In Vienna, Iran will be able to count on Russia and China, its faithful economic partners who have rejected all talk of sanctions against Iran." HOFMANN